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SUBJECT: SE GRATION VISITS SPLM-ADMINISTERED REGION OF SOUTHERN KORDOFAN

REF: KHARTOUM 222; KHARTOUM 308; KHARTOUM 218

1. (SBU) Summary: On February 18 U.S. Special Envoy (SE) to Sudan, General Scott Gration traveled to Kauda. Although h located in the north, Kauda is an area of Southern Kordofan State that is administered by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). SE Gration attended a meeting to discuss efforts to integrate Kaduna into Southern Kordofan's government. He also attended meetings on preparations for popular consultations in Southern Kordofan, and to learn about the initiatives of the Reconciliation and Peaceful Coexistence Mechanism (RPCM), an independent committee tasked with defusing violence in Southern Kordofan. In addition, he attended briefings in a newly-constructed camp for conducting disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) in Kauda, and also went to an active demining camp where UN and international NGOs described demining progress in the region. Kauda, one of the areas most devastated by the north/south war, clearly has a long road to recovery, but many people there who spoke to SE Gration expressed hope about the tentative first steps to recovery that have recently been achieved there. End Summary.

Integration Efforts Require Assistance

2. (SBU) On February 18 SE Gration met with state and local officials in Kauda to discuss progress toward the integration of the civil service and police there. Despite being located in the north, Kauda is an area that is a part of Southern Kordofan due to its being held by the SPLA during Sudan's civil war. It remains a "selected area" administered by the SPLM. Kamal Al Nour, Commissioner of Heiban Locality, told SE Gration that integration is one of the most important requirements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), but that progress is slow, and that in effect Kauda is still administered by the SPLM despite recent efforts to integrate it into Southern Kordofan. (Note: Khartoum officials note that efforts at integrating local civil servants from selected areas such as Kauda into the Sudanese civil service are hindered because these local officials are frequently not trained or qualified for the positions they currently hold. End Note.) State officials noted that approximately 2000 civil servants, including 700 teachers, have been indentified for integration, but that intensive training for them is needed, and called on USAID to support these efforts.

Preparations Underway for Popular Consultations

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3. (SBU) SE Gration met with Neroun Phillip, SPLM co-chair of the Presidential Assessment and Evaluation Commission and member of the Popular Consultations Steering Group. Phillip stated that initial

efforts were already underway in Southern Kordofan to "ascertain the views of the people", as dictated by the CPA (Ref A). Phillip stated that while it might not be possible to reach all the people of the state in this process, at least all state localities and most administrative units will be canvassed. He said that plans to raise public awareness and build capacity are also being addressed, though the primary responsibility for the process will rest with the elected legislature of Southern Kordofan and its designated commission. Phillip acknowledged that an SPLM boycott of elections in Southern Kordofan would create serious issues regarding the timing and conduct of popular consultations (Ref B), but said that work on popular consultations will continue with the assumption that election issues can otherwise be settled.

RPCM - An Innovative Approach to Conflict Mitigation

14. (SBU) SE Gration met with members of the RPCM, a task force created by Southern Kordofan Governor Ahmed Haroun in June, 2009, to rapidly address and defuse violent situation in Southern Kordofan, and to prevent future conflicts based on ethnicity, resource use, and historic animosity. Osman Gadim, Chair of the RPCM, told SE Gration that the RPCM is an independent task force consisting of eight members of diverse ethnic and professional

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background with high levels of influence in the state and their communities. Gadim noted that the RPCM explores innovative approaches to conflict mitigation focusing on timely intervention and early warning systems to address volatile situations. He said the RPCM succeeds in part because it receives support from both CPA partners and from the state and federal government. Gadim did note constraints on the effectiveness of the RPCM, including resource constraints and the lack of strong state level counterparts in neighboring states to address issues such as cross border migration.

New DDR Site Ready for Launch in March

15. (SBU) SE Gration visited a newly completed DDR site in Kauda where Colonel Karlo Trille Kuku (SPLM), Deputy Commissioner of the Joint DDR Commission, told him that the processing of 7000 DDR candidates, primarily old and disabled former combatants, will begin in March. Kuku noted that 20,000 candidates are scheduled to receive DDR in Southern Kordofan, with 3000 candidates in Julud and 8000 candidates in Kadugli having already been disarmed and demobilized, but awaiting reintegration benefits. Kuku said that these delays are caused by financial constraints and blamed these problems on what he claimed was the international community's failure to fulfill its financial commitments to DDR. (Note: Findings of mismanagement and corruption in a November 2009 assessment of the program have contributed to donor reluctance to contribute funds until these problems are resolved (Ref C) End Note.) He asked SE Gration to push the international community to fulfill its DDR funding commitments, so that DDR candidates in Kauda can receive reintegration benefits promptly after having been disarmed and demobilized.

Demining Process Improved

16. (SBU) SE Gration visited a demining camp near Kauda where United Nations Mine Action personnel and international NGO partners told him that progress on demining has undergone rapid progress recently due to improved techniques and technology. With respect to techniques, demining personnel explained that, because mine fields were not mapped in Sudan, demining was overly reliant on local knowledge and the memory of former combatants to choose locations to search for mines. This information was typically inaccurate and resulted in a large search for a limited number of mines. Recently

demining personnel have codified methods to reliably survey a large area to quickly determine the actual mined area. Demining personnel also displayed a recently-acquired device for subsurface mapping that triples the area that can be searched per day over previous methods. With these improvements, demining personnel said they have achieved more in the previous five months than they had in the last five years. They noted that most unexploded ordinance has been removed in Southern Kordofan, but that 70% of the mine threat remains.

17. (SBU) Comment. Kauda, one of the areas most devastated by the north/south war, clearly has a long road to recovery, but many people who spoke to SE Gration expressed hope about the tentative first steps to recovery that have recently been taken there. Local officials did not expressly credit Governor Haroun with progress in the state, but several officials noted that progress had begun "recently" or "in the last nine months" (Note. Haroun was appointed Governor in May 2009. End Note.) Lasting peace in Southern Kordofan cannot be assured until people in Kauda and other "selected areas" perceive themselves as citizens of their state and northern Sudan. End Comment.

18. (U) This cable has been cleared by the Office of the Special Envoy.
ASQUINO